



STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
LITCHFIELD DISTRICT PROBATE COURT  
KENT • LITCHFIELD • MORRIS • WARREN

DIANE S. BLICK  
JUDGE

March 9, 2009

Senator McDonald  
Representative Lawlor  
Senator Handley  
Committee Members:

As Judge of Probate for the towns of Kent, Litchfield, Morris and Warren, I appear today in opposition to S.J. No. 63 Resolution which proposes an amendment to the constitution of the state to eliminate the probate courts and in opposition to H.B. No. 6626 an act transferring jurisdiction of contested probate matters to the Superior Court. Allow me to explain why.

Last week, an 83 year old woman came to my Court. She had serious concerns about her close, 86 year old friend who was currently in a nursing home after being discharged from a recent hospital stay. He has no family available who can help him. The nursing home had him sign "some papers", he couldn't remember what the papers were, but told her he could now go home. This caring elderly woman stated he has "good days and bad days" but he certainly is in no condition to go home, alone, to an empty house.

Recently, grandparents came to my Court. Their daughter suffers from depression and substance abuse, lives with her boyfriend who has a criminal record and the biological father who had guardianship of their grandchild suddenly returned to South America leaving the 18 month old child with them.

Then, there is the son who freely spent his mother's money from the sale of her home leaving her with no money to pay for her nursing home care.

**REPLY TO:**  
LITCHFIELD OFFICE  
TOWN HALL  
74 WEST STREET  
P.O. BOX 505  
LITCHFIELD, CT 06759  
TEL. (860) 567-8065  
FAX (860)-567-2538  
HOURS  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
AND BY APPOINTMENT

KENT OFFICE  
TOWN HALL  
41 KENT GREEN  
KENT, CT 06757  
TEL. (860) 927-3729  
HOURS  
TUESDAY  
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM  
AND BY APPOINTMENT

Finally, there is the matter of the children, whose parents' lives were tragically ended during a domestic dispute. Where would the children live, who would take care of them, who would see to their financial and educational needs or their medical care.

As you can see, the day of probate courts just handling routine estate administration is long gone.

These types of matters are handled in probate courts all over Connecticut without fanfare but fairly and professionally. These cases are the norm, not the exception. Do not let the perception otherwise of a few notable cases skew your impression of the vital work done by the probate court system and its value to the residents of Connecticut.

These are the cases for which none of us take any credit for working them out in a forum that is dignified, professional, compassionate, fair and quiet.

The accessibility of probate courts is vital and being able to handle these types of cases in an atmosphere that is not intimidating allows us to resolve these cases in a much more efficient manner.

It is less important that a probate judge is an attorney. It is more important that a probate judge possess the integrity, dedication, compassion and common sense necessary to hear, assess and decide a case.

It is most fortunate that many of you have had no need to use the probate court for these types of matters. It is also most unfortunate that you have not been able to experience the valuable, professional work done by the probate court when handling these cases. I shutter to think what the parties involved in the cases mentioned would have had to go through had these

matters been handled in the Superior Court where everything is so much different, more complex, more open to the public and much more intimidating.

There is absolutely no reason to have jurisdiction in contested probate matters transferred to the Superior Court. Contested matters are currently heard in an efficient and timely manner by probate judges who are professional and specialists in probate law. To further clog up the Superior Court system with such cases would do an injustice to the people we serve and cause them additional expense and hardship.

Probate Courts have a specific purpose. They serve their communities and their constituents very well.

I urge you NOT to support S. J. No. 63 (Comm) Resolution nor H.B. No. 6626.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane S. Blick". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane S. Blick